

ANCILLARY ACCOMMODATION – COMMENTS BY A GLASGOW CHURCHMAN

This is accommodation usually attached to a church building or in a separate wing of a church Group.

This accommodation in a church building may be defined as rooms, apartments or simply areas used for activities other than public worship, though on occasion when the church is being re-decorated they may be so used.

This type of accommodation usually comprises the Vestry, the Session Room, Halls, Committee Rooms, Lounges, Halls of Friendship, Guild Rooms, Choir Rooms, Teaching Rooms, Toilets and Cloakrooms.

The chief requirement for ancillary accommodation should be, I would submit, ample provision for the Sunday School. This organization represents the future of the church. If teaching in this organization is poor the outlook is poor. All due care must therefore be exercised to see that ample provision is made for each Sunday School Department, Beginners, Primary, Junior and Senior and also Bible Classes.*

In these days when greater thought is being given to methods of teaching, to group activity, it is obvious that large halls are of little value for this type of work. Small rooms are required, either rooms permanently so arranged or large areas capable of being divided up by sliding or folding partitions. If the latter then care must be taken to see that the partitions are soundproof.

After these words of introduction, we will now consider the different rooms found attached to the church building.

The Vestry

As the name suggests this is the room in which the Clergy robe before Divine Service. It is also the office of the Minister of the Charge, his administrative Headquarters, his Interview Room and it may be that in some cases it could be used for study. It should be connected with the church, be near the entrance vestibule, have a private toilet and be equipped with a safe.

The Session Room

The Court of the Church responsible for the administration of each Parish area is the Kirk Session and it is in this room that they meet.

* This paragraph assumes the traditional Sunday School role and pattern. This pattern and the whole of parish education still need a long look – if only to ask, 'For whom are they supposed to be catering?'

The room should be easily accessible to the church because it is from this room that the communion vessels are taken to the Holy Table when the Sacrament is celebrated. It should also be easily accessible to the main circulation area of the Church Group. The room must be large enough to accommodate the Kirk Session when meeting in full or committee. Usually it is equipped with a fairly large table placed centrally, around which the members (Elders) sit either in one or two rows. It is also essential that this room has good cupboard space, possibly a safe. It must be near cloakrooms and toilets. Good light, both natural and artificial, is also essential.

The Church Lounge

In these days when the church is seeking to reach out from its past somewhat remote position, to attract the people of the Parish to its work it is becoming more and more essential to have a casual, relaxing place to which persons may come to talk, discuss, a place where the lonely person knows he will be welcome. A place where advice may be given, a place to which the shopper may drop in for a coffee and, above all, an informal meeting place. This room can fulfil these needs. It should be furnished as a Lounge with carpet, easy chairs, occasional tables, cheerful and good pictures. Alongside it should be placed a small kitchen where tea, coffee, pies, etc., can be made and heated. A magazine rack is an added asset. The room should have large windows so that the passers by may see into the room and be seen from it. It is the open welcoming area of the church.

The Place of the Large Hall

In these days when more and more attention is being paid to the detailed teaching of the young, the church must not lag behind. When regimentation is less and less regarded as vital for the community the place of the large hall must be reviewed and the question asked, Why have it? To play badminton, to dance? for the BB or the Scouts? for concerts? or perhaps a Burns Supper? All these things are of interest, but apart from the Boys Brigade or Scouts, have no teaching or training value. Would it be possible to arrange to divide it up with moveable screens so that we could have the best of both worlds, teaching and recreation. This must not be overlooked.

It would appear that each church may have a different set of circumstances to cater for.

The essential thing is to get the priorities right. The care of the young and their training or the amusement of the congregation. This does not mean that it is wise to disregard provision for any form

of amusement, certainly not, but the greater emphasis must be on training and teaching.

Therefore, if circumstances require a large hall it should be looked at as adjustable space, i.e. it should be capable of being divided by sliding, folding or other moveable screens which should be as sound-proof as possible.

These screens should be so arranged that by a simple movement they can be folded back and a large central area emerge capable of being used by the Boys Brigade, Scouts, or for a dance, badminton or other sports.

A good idea also will be to have a part of the hall area more permanently equipped as a stage with lighting, curtains and all necessary provision for stage work to take place. The Sunday Schools should be encouraged to use this facility for the dramatic presentation of the Gospel story.

Kitchen

This is a most important apartment, it should be near the large hall, connected with it by a servery, so allowing quick and easy service of food at church functions such as dances, socials and Burns Suppers.

Organizational Rooms

It used to be considered that the Woman's Guild should be given special treatment in being provided with a room of their own. This is not good as it tends to single them out as different, aloof or privileged. The good work they do is therefore cancelled by the bad feeling created. It is therefore best to provide a series of rooms for the use of all organizations. The church lounge described above would, it is submitted, be ideal for Guild use, as well as for other groups where talks and discussions take place or when a light social function is involved. The Kitchen should also be linked with at least one of these rooms. Certainly the one to be used by the Woman's Guild, which would also be suitable for Youth Fellowships.

Hall of Friendship

This is a comparatively new type of room. It should take the form of a large vestibule linking church and halls, a place of conversation and meeting. It must be attractive, bright in colour, acoustically satisfactory, spacious with ample space for notices (properly designed in panels), such notices being in an area with ample space to allow their being read without disturbing other persons who wish to talk.

Children's Playground and Crèche

The accommodation already listed should be easily able to be used for this purpose either as nursery school held during the week or for a Crèche on Sunday during church service time.

Storage

Care should also be taken to ensure that a large store is provided next to the room to be used for the Crèche for the storage of toys, apparatus etc.

It is also essential that the room to be used should be as sound-proof as possible.

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